

DER POYS IN SCHILLER'S HAUS



"Who Told You That
You a Director Was?"

By
ROY NORTON

Drawing by E. M. Ashe

FOR nearly a hundred years it had stood there in the heart of old New York, until its rafters were blackened with age, its paintings mellowed by time, and its original proprietors, long dead, forgotten. Many times it had been mentioned in more or less inaccurate histories, and had outlived, for the most part, the historians. Its oldest frequenters, and of old ones there were many, could not remember when Schiller's Haus was young. All they could remember was blackened rafters, mellowed pictures, and legends of the founder, who claimed kinship with the great poet. And of it and its antiquity was Herr Schmidt. Not everyone referred to him as Herr Schmidt; the members of the orchestra he directed having for him a title of their own, Herr Wilhelm, expressing familiarity without loss of reverence.

He was not unlike the tavern in outward indication of venerable age. He had shriveled with the years, until he appeared a mere miniature of what had been, and from long bending over the piano keys had acquired a slight stoop of the shoulders. In profile he looked like Liszt, with his big nose and frowning eyebrows,—eyebrows which softened when he played such music as he loved,—and his hair, white and long, fell away from a bald crown to a ridiculous incurving wave about his coat collar.

The oldest patrons could remember when Schiller's had been the most famous place in New York, and that the original orchestra had numbered fifteen pieces, also that the advent of Herr Schmidt had been an occasion of sufficient importance to cause a musical flutter. To have for orchestra leader a man who had been musical director for the King of Saxony was a great event in those far-off times when even music seemed young, and that for decades Schmidt's orchestra was the finest musical organization of the city seemed natural and proper. Could its old admirers forget the fact that when Jenny Lind came to America Herr Schmidt's band left Schiller's without music several nights that it might play for the "nightingale"? Never! It was triumphant proof of their musical judgment!

They might, as they grew old and doddering, forget other triumphs; but not so with Herr Schmidt, the triumphs being milestones in the fifty years of his life which had revolved around Schiller's Haus. Once, in enthusiastic mood, an English Prince destined for a throne had complimented the accomplished fifteen, and on a later occasion a mighty German nobleman had publicly declared that America would not be without fine music so long as Herr Schmidt lived to lead an orchestra. These were encomiums he cherished; for Princes, like Kings, should not know or could not say wrong.

In that half-century it was as if the city had walked

away from Schiller's and him. Once he had lived "Down Town," that vague section bordered by Tenth-st.; now he lived on a Hundred and Tenth. Not from choice, for he had clung to his first apartments for forty-five years—until the clangor of traffic, bellowing and insistent, surrounded and overwhelmed them, and his landlord gave way, with his building, to the march of the skyscrapers.

"Bud where shall I go?" he asked, bewildered, when told of the sale. "Where can I go?"

"Why, anywhere! There's lots of other places."

"Bud dere is no place like dis. *Ach, Himmel!* You don't understand!"

It was quite natural that he should go to a Hundred and Tenth, its being the nearest, in sound at least, to his old home, and it was not until he moved there that Herr Schmidt realized that he was growing old and that habit had woven him in its snare.

AT least a dozen times in that first month in his new abode he turned out at five o'clock, when the short afternoon concert was over, and walked, with absent mind, to the site of his old home. Each time he went humming along, with hands clasped behind his back, and nodding to the children who hailed him, until confronted by the great scaffolding of steel that marred the site of the house he had known. Each time he threw up his hands helplessly and with a sense of bewilderment turned toward the subway, that terrible monster that had steadily burrowed northward since he and Schiller's were young.

In its recesses folk jarred him—crowded him—were rude! Quite often, tired and old, he found it difficult to stand and swing to a strap by his white, thin hand, that some tired woman might take his seat. Once a man in haste knocked him down as he stepped carefully out, heeding the bewildering admonishments to "Step lively! Don't crowd! Watch your steps! Hurry up! Don't hurry!" and "Let 'em off, won't you?" The fall sprained his fingers, and no more lonely spirit ever sat round Schiller's than Herr Schmidt in that enforced three days' va-

cation, the only one he had ever known in his many years of service.

The youngest man who obeyed his directions was Herr Mueller, and he was somewhere in the fifties. Herr Schmidt was wont to assert, when admonishing him for a false note on the clarinet, that "Ven you older ge'ts, poy, you blay some better yet, *hein?*" And Herr Mueller, accepting the reproof with the meekness due a great leader, would obediently acquiesce. A terrible martinet of a director was Herr Schmidt! "Poof!" he would say to Herr Dipple, the cornet player, when the latter would forget to vamp in parts that fell to him, as befalls the cornet players in small orchestras, "Poof! You blay der gornet, ain'd id? Poof!" And that was sufficient.

The vamping had come gradually; for, from being an orchestra of fifteen men when its director was young, brave, and bold, it had dwindled to seven. In years its original members had passed away to a place where harps were substituted for the instruments they had learned, and, as times grew harder for the old German resort, these places were unfilled. When gray headed patrons became querulous, sitting beneath the steins with their grandchildren, they bemoaned the fact more than Herr Schmidt, who by degrees had become accustomed to it.

Each time a man dropped out, by death, his fellows sent him a harp of immortelles. Twice there had been diversity of opinion; once when the first violin, the clarinet, and the trombone had wanted an anchor, with the suggestion that there was hope; the other time when the bass viol, the cello, and the second violin had wanted a wreath because times were hard and wreaths much cheaper. Sometimes as he grew older, and on days when he felt downcast, Herr Schmidt wondered what "der poys" would get for him; but as a rule he never felt old. Indeed, he was remarkably young, save that his philosophies were ripened by observation.

IN Schiller's he was a hero. Nearly every night the same tables were occupied by the same people. There was the Herr Doctor, who liked Offenbach and thereby won high regard from the orchestra. There was the delicatessen man, who had grown rich and was assertive that Wagner was far greater than Beethoven. There was "Der Brofessor," who frequently gladdened the heart of Herr Schmidt by asking him to play a piano solo, "A very small one, please, from der greatest of musicians, Chopin." All the younger guests were riffraff who didn't count and asked for the most ridiculous selections.

There were other vacancies outside the bandstand which had never been adequately filled when the old guard of Schiller's passed away. Always

there were the two or three days rendered conspicuous by absence, and then the whispered answer to inquiry telling that age had paid its peaceful toll. On those nights Herr Schmidt played the tunes loved by the departed with something of reverence that silenced those who preferred ragtime and lent a new charm to the music of that most excellent and famous organization which obeyed the beat of his fine old fingers upraised from the worn keys.

AT exactly seven minutes past one on the eventful day of his life, when Herr Schmidt was just finishing his black breakfast coffee, that being the exact time when he drank it daily, the postman entered and handed him a long envelop bearing an American stamp. It was something so unusual that he looked at it through, and then over, his spectacles. Some prescience restrained him from opening it for a long time, and then, reluctantly but as if it was a duty to be performed, he cut the side with the handle of a teaspoon. It was a request from one of the most famous lawyers of New York that he call at his office at his earliest convenience on an important matter.

For a long time he stared at it, lying malignantly open on his table, and thought. He had never owed a dollar in his life; so it could not be that he had been sued. Out of his salary of thirty-five dollars a week he had never failed to deposit, timorously and with foresight for the rainy day, at least ten dollars in the German Savings. It could not be debt, unless— He paused again. Once he had signed a note for Ditmeier, his janitor, when Ditmeier's eleventh child was born. Perhaps Ditmeier hadn't paid!

He got up from the table and took his hat down with the same methodical, fifty years' motion and put it on his head. He forgot, however, to remove his spectacles, and stared absentmindedly before him when he passed from Schiller's with an unaccustomed rapidity of stride. The orchestra would not play again until four o'clock. By that time he must know the worst and be back to his post.

The lawyer's offices, overpoweringly suggestive of lawsuits and briefs, threatened and subdued him when he entered. It was the first time he had ever been in such a place, and he felt as a man about to be tried for his first crime. He took off his hat, baring his fine white brow, and pulled out his handkerchief to wipe the perspiration from his forehead. He had to clear a tremulous throat when the haughty young clerk came forward to ask his name and business. The half-dozen other clients in waiting bored him through with savage eyes until, in the most obscure corner, he found a chair on whose edge he sat, still holding his hat and still mopping his bare dome.

The clerk hurried back with apparent deference, as if he, Herr Schmidt, was a criminal of too great importance to be kept waiting.

"You are to come in at once," he said, and led the way to the inner office, passing numerous funny little pens where young men worked over briefs or talked with clients.

THE great lawyer rose to meet him and came forward. "You are Mr. Heinrich Wilhelm Schmidt, who for so many years has directed the orchestra at Schiller's Haus, are you not?" he asked, and Herr Schmidt confirmed the identification.

He thought there was something smug, terrible, and tigerlike in the way the lawyer asked him to

take a seat in front of the desk as he opened a drawer.

"There's no further need for identification," the lawyer added. "I have known you in person—by sight, at least—since I was a boy. Moreover, I have taken pains to be certain that you are the man."

Herr Schmidt began to fear that it was something more grave than a delinquent note, although he could recall nothing he had ever done of which he was ashamed, and again he wiped his brow with his handkerchief.

"You have fallen heir to the estate of Heinrich Wilhelm Schmidt of Leipsic," the lawyer said, and Herr Schmidt uttered a forlorn "*Gott im Himmel! Mein uncle with whom I quarreled fifty years ago is dead!*"

"He is, and, what is more, you are his sole heir," the lawyer continued. "He leaves an estate valued at something like a million marks. Let me see; that's about two hundred thousand dollars, our money."

Herr Schmidt sat and gazed out of the office window, bewildered. The thought that ran uppermost was that it was now too late for him to return to Germany and effect a reconciliation. The sum itself was too stupendous to be comprehended; but the fact that he could not again see his uncle with whom he had fought, boyishly, was quite plain. The lawyer had been talking as befits a lawyer addressing a client of such wealth, and now Herr Schmidt again caught his words.

"I have put, by order of the German attorney handling the estate, fifty thousand dollars to your credit in the City National Bank. I will now take you down there, identify and introduce you, so that you may have its immediate use. After that, say to-morrow if you wish, we will go into other details."

STILL Herr Schmidt sat quietly as if stupefied, and was again staring out of the window when the lawyer took his hat from a closet and spoke to him. All the way down the elevator, down the steps of the building, through the short streets where men hurried and crowded, and into the great bank, Herr Schmidt passed, dumb and unseeing. His mind was confused and vainly striving to grasp all the contingencies of change that had been thrust upon him through neither act nor wish of his own.

Inside the bank he took his hat off once more and blinked up with great deference at the manager of the institution to whom he was introduced. They brought a book and cards for his signature, and without knowing why he signed them. When they gave him a checkbook, he turned it over in his fingers and in childlike simplicity asked how he was to use it. They were amazed at his ignorance, not knowing that in all his life he had never signed a check and that all he knew of the world of banking was the wicket down at the savings institution to which each Monday he carried his little book and ten dollars.

The lawyer left him standing, still dazed, on the steps of the huge bank, holding the checkbook in his hand. For a long time he stood there, trying to distinguish whether he was dreaming. As if awakening from sleep, he discovered the book and for awhile looked at its blank pages. All he had to do, they had told him, was to sign his name to one of them for whatever he wished.

He would prove whether this was a dream! He passed back in before the formidable brass railings

behind which men worked with large trays of coin and bills—more than he had ever seen before. He went nervously to a standing desk and filled out one of the blanks. At first he thought he would test this promise of wealth to the very utmost; so signed it for a hundred dollars. That was for so much that it seemed an extravagance; besides, he thought how idiotic it would be to carry such an immense sum around with him. He tore the check to pieces, regretting the waste of such a nice piece of paper, and wrote another one, studying for a long time as to the amount he should name, and at last filled it in for two dollars. That would be a test indeed!

It was so easy to get the money that he was amazed. All he did was to stand in line, timidly pass the slip of paper over an onyx slab, and back came two new one-dollar bills, which he shoved into his pocket. All his simple life he had dreamed, as all men dream, of having lots of money, sometimes in wild flights of imagination picturing what extravagances he would indulge in did he ever possess as much as twenty thousand dollars. Now he had that amount and more. He stood on the bank steps, fingering the crisp bills in his pocket to convince himself of realities, when he was aroused by the distant chiming of a clock hung in a tower which had risen long years after he came. His fine ear, attuned to rhythm and finish of sound, caught the incomplete note.

"Ach, Gott!" he muttered. "I shall tardy be!" and, in a frenzy of haste lest he be late at Schiller's Haus, he plunged madly toward the nearest subway station. To be late was impossible. For forty years such an untoward calamity had never been!

IN the afternoon performance he was like a man playing mechanically. Even the strains of music could not drown the humming in his ears. "You are now rich! You are now rich!" The pride of his life, the creature of his sole ambition, his orchestra, was playing unheard. There was not a man of the lot that could not be styled an artist, each was playing up to his standard, and yet his director was deaf with that reiteration, "You are now rich!" Each marked and wondered at his abstraction.

At the close of the afternoon concert he restrained them by a swift beckoning clutch, desperate, as though he would hold them together. "Gentlemen," he said in his native tongue, "I shall be with you no more. I have come into money. I can't tell you how much. Congratulate me! I return to the fatherland. I am—well, I am through. I am going, and I—"

He broke down at that, while in a brief interim they peered at him, open eyed, and suddenly Herr Dipple took off his huge, iron framed spectacles and wiped them. The motion released them from the spell and they tried to make it a joyous season of congratulation. The manager of Schiller's Haus, surprised by this demonstration, joined them and heard the story. He too congratulated; but he shook his head sadly.

"What shall I do?" he said several times. "What shall I do? Perhaps I shall try that Herr Professor who is concert pianist for the Royal German band what plays at Carnegie, *hein?* But he will be no Schmidt!" And he went sadly away.

But before "der boys" had recovered from this

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A BIG LESSON FROM A LITTLE INCIDENT

By Smith D. Fry

SEVEN young Japanese recently visited Washington, and during their visit to the Capitol they unconsciously taught a lesson of intense interest and importance to a mature observer.

One of the professional guides was explaining the great painting, by Powell, of Perry's victory at Lake Erie. He stated that the American Commodore was practically beaten, because he was unable to maneuver his flagship, the *Lawrence*, on account of the dead calm. He said:

"There was no efficient signal system in those days, no megaphone, no wireless telegraphy, nor other means by which the Commodore could give orders to the other ships of his fleet, and the commanders of the American vessels did not know what to do without orders from their commander. In this exigency, Commodore Perry did the only correct thing, but the most hazardous. He entered a yawl and was rowed across the lake, as the picture shows, while all the guns of the British ships were aimed at him. Fortunately, not one of their shots took effect. Commodore Perry reached the *Niagara*, found some land breezes in Put-in-Bay, maneuvered his ships so that they joined the *Lawrence*, and within an hour had won a glorious victory."

"Who is the little boy in the picture?" inquired one of the Japanese. "He looks frightened."

"Maybe he was frightened," replied the guide; "but he grew up to manhood and demonstrated that he was a stranger to fear. He became another Commodore Perry. It was that little boy, when grown

to manhood, who visited Japan and opened her ports to the civilized world."

"What!" exclaimed everyone of the seven Japanese. "Are you sure that little boy was *our* Commodore Perry?"

Then each of them pulled a notebook from his



Fragment of Powell's Painting Showing Commodore Perry and His Son.

pocket and began writing memoranda concerning that picture. They wanted to know where they could buy copies of the painting. They were directed to a store where photographs could be procured. They remained before the picture for well nigh half an hour. Finally one of their number said:

"This painting has repaid us for our time and trouble in leaving other engagements to come and see your Capitol. It is a beautiful building; but that painting is the greatest thing in it—for us. You should have that painting exhibited in Japan. Hereafter we shall tell all Japanese who visit America to come here and see that little boy who grew up to become *our* Commodore Perry."

When they finally turned away from the picture, they took off their hats to the youthful figure and clapped their hands, applauding him.

Those seven Japanese are educated, prosperous, and of the dominant influential class of people that form public sentiment. The writer witnessed the scene. It was spontaneous, earnest, and impressive, showing intensely the feeling of veneration the Japanese have for Perry and the good he wrought for them. Undoubtedly their nation entertains similar feelings and

emotions. Witnessing such a scene, is it possible to believe that they cherish any other than feelings of gratitude and kindness toward the nation that sent Perry to them, thereby bringing them into touch with world civilization, and consequently world power?

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Der Poys in Schiller's Haus

Continued from page 4

exciting event, Herr Schmidt, torn by emotion, tear dimmed, and overwrought, slipped from Schiller's Haus and was starting for 110th-st. Once there, he tried to readjust himself. All the years he had thought of returning to Leipsic; now that it was possible the return had lost its glamorous charm. Yet he felt that he must go. It was not befitting that a man of his future station should be untraveled. He sat with drooping head while the western sun slipped from sight, its yellow rays touching with soft fingers his whitened hair.

For a long time after it was gone he did not turn on the lights; then, vaguely troubled by unaccustomed idleness, he slipped into his evening clothes, took the subway, and turned toward Schiller's Haus. Formerly he had thrust aside the big swinging doors with a proprietary air; now he entered slowly, as a guest. Everything was the same, and yet had undergone a marvelous and hostile change. Furtively, almost, he sought a chair in the corner, carefully avoiding the seats invariably claimed by the doctor, the delicatessen man, and "der Professor."

The waiter greeted him with annoying deference. It emphasized that he was no longer a part of the house, but a guest, and the white haired old fellow who had been wont to greet him with cordial familiarity now stood at attention when he took Herr Schmidt's order. It was a foolish one, such as a man struggling between a life's habit of economy and unexpected affluence must give. Herr Schmidt stammered when giving it.

He ate heedlessly, without zest, absorbed in hearing the tones of the piano under the younger hands. Once the new director turned and hastened a tempo. Herr Schmidt did not like that. He was certain that he knew tempos and interpretations. He was gratified that the delicatessen man, who had come in, paused, between mouthfuls, and looked back over his shoulder with surprise. But Herr Schmidt was more gratified that the orchestra which he had brought out—from the time when he and they were young—declined to accept the new and vulgarly hastened tempo.

"It is not accelerating," he muttered to himself. "They forgot not that I take it so," and hummed it softly to himself. Some one stared at him. It made him nervous. He paid his count with a surreptitious air, fingering the roll of bills beneath the table as though fearing that Hans the waiter would accuse him of displaying new-gained wealth.

He hurried from the place to wander through the streets, to stop before the playhouses which he had never entered, to watch crowds of merry-makers whom he had never known. Once in awhile some of them had been seen at Schiller's Haus and were familiar. One man turned to look at him. Another addressed him, astonished that he should be there in the street. In the very tail of the procession he made his way home, to toss on his bed until dawn, the hour at which, through all his life, he had gone to sleep.

HE awoke in a great surge of loneliness, went to his window and leaned out where he could watch the children play—little tots that were his friends. One of them sighted him and in childish treble shouted a greeting and clapped her hands.

"Aren't you coming down to—to play with us?" she called, sensing from that distance with childish intuition the vague droop in his attitude. He tried to answer as gaily as he usually did; but choked. Pretty soon he would see them no more, and they would forget the white old playmate who devoted an hour each day to their amusement.

He was a sorry entertainer that afternoon; for despite his bravest effort he would become abstracted and drop to a bench where, with bent head, he would look at nothing for a long time till aroused by some little one's demand. He fought off the desire to hurry to Schiller's Haus at four o'clock, and, long after the children had gone to their homes, still huddled on the park bench. He had believed, before this catastrophe of inheritance, that the new home on 110th-st. could never be the same as the old one on 10th; but, now that he was about to leave it, a subtle charm had enveloped it. He thought, with melancholy wistfulness, that the room would miss him, though he had lived in it but five years; that each inanimate object might hunger for his touch; that there was no place in that distant Leipsic of his boyhood where he could look out through all the seasons and see familiar trees. Why, the very one beneath which he sat had been named by him! How often he had looked from his window before retiring at dawn and said, "Ach, Herr Bismarck, you chust wake up, hein? Wie geht's, mein freund? I see you shake the little branch up at the top in greeting!" Perhaps Herr Bismarck would watch his window in the coming dawns and be sorry that he was gone.

AS eight o'clock approached he grew more lonely. He donned his evening clothes as if he was again to direct the orchestra and slowly made his way to the hole in the ground through which he must pass to gain Schiller's Haus. He was irritable and nervous, more so than ever before in his life. Although for years he had not lost his temper, on this night his tongue gave way when a young hoodlum almost knocked him over in rushing for the gate.

"Donnerwetter!" he burst out. "Du Schafskopf, du dummer! Was ist los? You think you are a whole automobile, hein? You—

you—" and then, in a final burst of desire for epithet,—"you peanut machine!"

That those who heard laughed at his broken English did not improve his temper; but when he again sneaked into Schiller's Haus irritation had once more been supplanted by melancholy. The orchestra—his orchestra—did not observe his entrance. It was in the full swing of a stirring march, and the new director, smiling with egotism, as if the organization was his own creation, was waving aloft a baton held in one bejeweled hand while filling in chords with the other. A baton! A baton—when he, Schmidt, could make them do his will with eloquent fingers that beat and beckoned, opened and closed, and were never used in a paltry march! Surely the man from the Royal German band was a fool to beat march time for seven men each of whom was an artist to his fingertips!

He was so disgusted that he ate his dinner without ever looking up. He did not answer the waiter who evinced a desire to talk to him. The squat old stein on the plate rail above his head was no more speechless than he.

NOW the place was filling up with the chatterers, the late diners, the frivolous sight-seers, who came because Schiller's Haus and Schmidt's orchestra were famous. Already, with chairs scarcely warmed, they were calling for their favorite selections. Herr Schmidt in his corner sneered openly at the actress looking person who wanted the "Dill Pickle Rag" and laughed derisively at the overdressed and coiffured occupants of a table who cried into their plates after demanding the mawkish "Rosary." He had always detested the "Rosary." A gruff voice demanded "Kammenoi Ostrow," and he leaned far out to see the applicant's face, and when the man turned openly thanked him.

"Dot is museec, mein Herr!" he said gratefully, and the man stared at the white haired old fellow as though believing him insane.

The orchestra began the piece with the new director trying to enforce another tempo of his own. The clarinet player, gray headed as were all of Schmidt's orchestra, looked up and for the first time sighted the outcast. He was so excited that he played a goosene, and Herr Dipple, amazed and wondering what could have caused such a rare mistake, whirled round in his seat and sighted Herr Schmidt. He too distinguished himself with a false note; but, without appearing in the least contrite, removed his instrument from his lips and waved his hand, leaving blank an effective passage. The cello player half stood and, reckless of the new director, paused to wave his bow above his head.

The man from the Royal German band was frantically trying to bring his players to time again, and was gesturing like a puppet in a marionette show, his hair tossing wildly and his voice drowning the instruments. It was too much! People over all the great blackened old hall were beginning to rise to their feet and laugh. They were even offering suggestions to the puppet who was tearing his hair in rage.

IN the corner, beneath the stein whose goblin inanely sneered, a table was sharply overturned with a clatter of falling crockery. Reckless of appearance, Herr Schmidt rushed out and took the steps of the orchestra two at a time. He caught the puppet by the coat collar and shoved him down the steps.

"Get out!" he yelled scornfully. "Get out! Gott im Himmel! Who told you that you a director was? You to lead my band!"

There was a lull over the place, and even the delicatessen man and the Herr Doctor were on their feet. The manager, attracted from another room by the uproar, came hurrying in.

Herr Schmidt sighted him and in his guttural voice that belled with oldtime resonance, addressed him clear across the hall. "I stay—here—now—always for der whole time!" he called. "Der poys can't blay already widout me. See! Dey blay for me!"

Then he turned to them and, in the uproar of applause from old admirers and babel of excitement, said quite softly but in a voice that reached his "poys," "Now we blay dot be-utiful piece 'Kammenoi Ostrow,' und we blay it! Heint!"

And as he again felt the worn old keys beneath his fingers and heard the splendid, wailing song from instruments that throbbled to his lead, he made his decision. The last note of the finale came. The applause seemed never to end, and to the manager, who had come back to seize his hand, he made his only explanation:

"Heraus mit der money!" he said. "Id can stay der banks inside. I blay mit der poys in Schiller's Haus!"

JOY MULTIPLIED

Full rich is he who, seeing gracious flowers
Like scattered incense at another's feet,
Can royally and with high heart rejoice,
Though not for him, can deem the blossoms sweet.

And Nature has made the fairest gift to him
Who finds a sweetness in another's cup,
And hungers less, because his brother feasts,
Though at the banquet board he may not sup.

Though in the dusty highway he may tread,
Unmeasured wealth has he, and all untold
For he has felt the touch of brotherhood.
His joy is multiplied a thousandfold!

—Cora Lapham-Hazard